

Drugs and Alcoholism As A Means Of Survival.

Chapter -11-



By January of 1982 I had hunkered down in my sister basement for the winter. Once again money and snow had limited my access to the wonderful shows occurring on campus. At this time **Crazy Mama's**, **Mr Browns**, **The Agora** and **Staches and Little Brothers** had become the prime hot spots for Punk and New Wave. To me punk was meant to tear down the barrier between performer and audience. Unfortunately, by that time the "for profit suits" had co-oped both movements. So I sat on the side lines and watched the parade pass me by. Most of The Offense crowd had kept their hats in the ring hoping for a record deal. But the major record labels were focused on bringing foreign acts to Columbus. To me there seemed to be little interest in helping Columbus bands break nationally. So I focused on my songwriting and saw some progress with new songs like **"No Where 80"** and **"Kisses and Hugs"**. Finally in February of 1982 I saw my 45 **"Marriage Vows"** get released on New Age Records. It sank like the Titanic! It didn't even get reviewed in the local press and **Mike Rep** ended up giving away most of the records for free. I had used up the last of my resources in putting out a flop. But one bright spot was **WFMU** which had the 45 in light rotation. Go Figure? **Stik Hoffman** was proud and in shock. *"How in the fuck did they go for that he kept asking me?"* I told him WFMU was a weirdo station. They like **Captain Beefheart** stuff! **Stik Hoffman** was baffled and perplexed by the 45. After that his cocaine usage increased. So I just marked it down to life and moved on with my art.

In my opinion, looking back at the year of 1982 there were certain cow-town musicians who would go on to have a major impact on the OSU musical culture in coming years:

Ron House/Twisted Shouts/Moses Carry Out/Great Plains/Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments.

Jim Shepard/ Vertical Slit/Phantom Limb/Skull Bank/V-3.

Mike Rep/Mike Rep and the Quotas/The True Believers/Twisted Shouts/Skull Bank/The Whales/The Harrisburgers/Fire Lane/Jayfish/Sex Tide.

Tommy Jay/True Believers/Mike Rep and The Quotas/Fire Lane/The Hellions/Skull Bank/The Harrisburgers/The Whales/Jayfish/Tommy Jay's Freak Show/Tommy Jay All Stars..

The Screaming Urge/ Mike Ravage/Mike Rock/David Manic

Other *"taste makers"* who didn't receive as much historical credit but who were exploring new ground in my opinion were:

Ted & Carla Lust /True Believers/ The Whales/The Harrisburgers/ Tommy Jay's Freak Show/Tommy Jay All Stars/The Ted Lust band.

T. A. Lafferty /Hellions/Tommy Jay All Stars/The Harrisburgers/Freight Train.

Kurt Tuckerman /The Lazy Boys/Phantom Limb/G.G.'s Kids

Dana Riashi /The Blunt Stitches/Post Industrial Noise/Near Paris.

Gerald Nelson / Post Industrial Noise/Near Paris.

Mark Eitzel /Cowboys/The Naked Skinny's/American Music Club.

Max Flash /The Highly Evolved Cosmic Beings/The Screaming Urge/Kevyn and the Kausalites/Fun Quotient 150.

Greg Six /The Highly Evolved Cosmic Beings/ Moses Carry Out.

Don Holland /Great Plains/Gibson Brothers/The Bassholes.

Ron Koal /Kid Koal/The Trillionairs

Charles and Bruce Nutt /Crazy Mama's

The Human Switch Board.

The Razor Penguins.

Chuck Kubat/New Age Records

Tim Anstaett/The Offense

But there was only two bands in my view, that would make it pass the new century: **The Screaming Urge** and **Mike Rep** and **"The Quotas"** / **"The True Believers"**. Both bands had a duo at the heart of their cores. For the **Urge** it was **Mike Ravage** and **Mike Rock**. For the **Believers** it was **Tommy Jay** and **Mike Rep**. **David Manic** flailing about bashing his kit to smithereens was a wonder to behold. He was one of the fastest motherfuckers alive. **Manic** kept a deadly beat. **Rock** was a toe tapper! And **Ravage**, he was just fucking cool! To me it was like the rivalry between the **Beatles** and the **Rolling Stones**. The **Believers** organization center around **Mike Rep**, whereas; **Ravage** and **Rock** maintained a Mexican stand-off until their demise in the mid 2010's. Repski was a total spot light. I remember playing with **Rep and the Quotas** at his 50th birthday party at Larry's bar. At that point I had been working off and on with Rep for 25 years. I posted most of it on You Tube. Everyone got shitfaced that night and old **"Repski"** proved himself a master punk to all! There were no doubters left after that gig.

By March of 1982 Tammy had upped and moved to "Music City". It had always been her life long dream. She really wasn't happy here in Ohio. It happens! Then she was ghost! Her departure had a profound impact on me. I began to wonder where was I headed in life. Something began calling out to me. The whisper became a shout. **Nashville, In Nashville**. There I could get my songwriting together! Maybe I could get a gig on Music Row? Maybe a recording studio might hire me as a cleaner? At least I could always print. That is, until my skin exploded once again. Something was forcing me to following her. Something inside me was pushing me toward grabbing the brass ring. I thought it was love. It turns out to be fate! Something kept telling me it's time to go. The dream was calling out. All I can say is I've always taken notice of the omens. And the omens were everywhere at that point. I needed to break free of my sister and mother. Sometimes the love of others will hold you back from the thing you need to be doing. I needed to be independent. I needed to have my own apartment. I needed to have my own car. I did not want to be dependent on the charity of others! I needed to learn how to write a proper song! If you can to that then anything might be possible. So the seed was planted and I began to make plans to move to Nashville.

When April of 1982 rolled around I began to get blistering on my body from all the printing chemicals I had been using. Soon my 2nd divorce was to become final and it looked like I would have to find some other kind of work. The dermatological situation made it difficult for me to continue as a printer. The problem of insecurity was stressing me out. I was living on borrowed time. So I went to this 75 year old specialist who diagnosis was *"venereal warts"*. WTF? Doctor Shepard had prescribed a acid based cream which burned painful holes into my *"cock, arms and legs"*. It was a treatment I had not bargain on. As rumors began to spread I found myself the center of amusement. Heaven only knows what people thought. To add to the drama Vicky and her lawyer had file for another support increase. Boom! If it were not for the fact that I knew Kathy was a better parent I would have gotten a sizable settlement from her inheritance; and custody too. Maybe Vicky had sense that? Maybe she thought it was a good time to file?

Growing up I didn't have stable role models. Most of the kids on 1st avenue didn't either. Kathy could provide that to the kids. So, I went behind my lawyers back and signed away all my rights to the house, inheritance and cars. Not only this, I took on all of the debts. I wanted my kids to have a better life than I had gotten. When my lawyers found out what I had done they withdrew from my case and the Judge rubber stamped the decree. By this time I had grown ashamed and depress of my skin situation and life status. By May of 1982 I had a new dermatological doctor. I fired the quack. When Doctor Betchel read the medical reports of Doctor Shepard he strongly disagreed with the diagnosis. Doctor Betchel even stated to me that Doctor Shepard ought to have retired. Doctor Betchel didn't know what I had but he was sure it wasn't *"venereal warts"*. He got to work and started to research the 5 or 6 rare cases in the medical journals. He was fascinated with my case and eventually arranged for about 10 other Dermatological researchers from all around the nation to fly into Columbus and inspect my penis which bore the brunt of this painful problem. Next he did a few biopsy's and when the lab reports came back he declared I had a mutated form of "Lichen Planus Skin Disorder". Next he advised me to find another occupation because this disorder would eventually turn into cancer if left unchecked. So the hand writing was on the wall. All of this confirm my decision to move to Nashville. But it would take another year before I could raise the funds.



By May of 1982 Doctor Betchel had started me on a testosterone cream to prevent my skin from scaring. The only problem with that was a “constant erection” which I desperately tried to conceal while I was working. A few of the black females noticed. Some seemed to be flirty about it. One office worker even grabbed me while I was walking down the hall and made no bones about being turn on. She would have been an easy score. I had been with Black OSU students during my Greyship days. They take good care of the white-boys. But I was in pain and full of terror. Sex was not an option. If they knew what I looked like naked they wouldn't want to risk it. Talk about low self esteem. So I tried to avoid people. And staff meetings were a huge problem. I tried to keep it on the down low and avoided all eye contact while adjusting my willy so as to avoid discomfort. After a few weeks the sores healed up nicely but the outbreaks kept on coming. The doctor told me it would take a few years to get back to normal. He told me that my “Lichen Planus Skin Disorder” would burn itself out which it did. Thank God! He had prescribed some pills that suppressed the outbreaks but I was always so horny from the meds. What the disorder did was to kick up my auto-immune response to the point where it was attacking my skin. On a bright note my friends kept turning me on to free mixed-tapes of all the new releases. I would ride my moped down to the “**Smoke-In**” at the state house lawn and watch bands like the Screaming Urge preform. I even shot some 8mm film of some of the bands. Mostly I just hung out with Lynn, Arlus, Rock and Chris the Anarchist. I think Kurt Tuckerman and Max Flash's new band **Curious George** opened the show. That summer I spent most of my free time riding my moped around Columbus. It sort of helped me put the whole mess into perspective. At that point I didn't have a recording studio or equipment. I was dependent on Tommy Jay and Jim Shepard. I was limited to only writing and playing my guitar.



As I drifted into June of 1982 Jim Shepard approached me to print the covers of his “**New Pill New Thrills**” 45. I think this project was recorded before **Dan Juranko** and **David Mikula** returned to Clearwater Florida. Jim and I had been studying **William S. Burroughs** use of stream of consciousness writing. Also, **George Brock**'s cut and paste approach fit nicely into my thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis method. I started to use this system as a brainstorming method which I would then develop into a final song. Jim and I were both painting at a furious rate by this time. We spent hours talking about the Dada and Surrealist movements. Jim, Roxanne and I had been doing “*Table Top*” cassette recordings that in my view were ground breaking. We recorded a lot of stuff that summer but most of it will never be released. No doubt, the cassettes are either damage, destroyed or lost. Looking back I would say that it was probably some of the best work I ever did. But no matter how much he tried Jimbo just couldn't wrap his head around my growing interest with Nashville. Later on that would change. Even at this point we knew that someday we would from a group. But that was 5 years down the road. On the other hand Mike Rep was a fan

of country. He was more into bluegrass whereas I was into MOR 1950's country pop. When ever I could get \$5 bucks I would park my moped a **Bernie's Bagels & Deli**. Repski, House and Shepard had taken to doing solo gigs there. They always let me in free and bought me a few when ever I showed up. And with \$5 bucks in my pocket I could hit White Castle on the way home. I still hit White Castle after a gig. It is a tradition.

That October of 1982 I took a Greyhound bus to see Tammy in **Nashville**. She was going to pick me up at the bus station but after a 30 minuet wait I figure she wasn't coming. So I bounced towards the streets. Then just at the corner to lower Broadway I heard her yell. We spent the next week together exploring Nashville and each other's bodies. At the time lower Broadway was an eye opener. It was a total skid row. One seedy motherfucker! It was nothing like the media portrayed it out to be. To me music row was a gated community. **16th Avenue** (Music Row) only allowed the recording industry elite in the **CBS, Capital, Universal** and **RCA** studios. The tourists had to stand on the sidewalks and take pictures. There was no way to get a job. The good old boy musicians and songwriters had it lock down tighter than a gnat's ass. Only a few made it into their ranks. Lower Broadway reminded me of **New York City's Bowery** district back in 1970. There was nothing but alcoholics sleeping in their urine on the sidewalks. Cardboard bedrolls everywhere. It was nothing like the **Hee Haw** TV show. But by 1984 they began to run off the winos. Next the city fathers pumped hundreds of millions into the lower broadway commerce zone project. By 1986 it became a massive rebuilding re-branding project that transform the slum into a very upscale tourist trap. Tammy didn't have any issue with my skin. And the testosterone cream made for hot sex. Her mother seem to be attracted by this. No doubt she heard all the noise we were making at night that week. In morning she kept giving me admiring glances. Her mother was a very attractive redhead and I sensed she was a extremely passionate person. No doubt, she could teach a cowboy a few things about the rodeo. But little did I know that Tammy had a few cowboys on the side. She was playing for keeps and I didn't qualify cash wise. I was just leverage to help get a better contract. She was going for the highest bidder at that point. I don't blame her. Tammy had the total package at that point. Brains and a body build for sin. If I was her I would be playing the same nesting game too. Youth demands that. Maybe that is why her mother didn't wear a bra around me? Guys notice things like that. Besides, I wasn't sure of the status between those two. I've always said that "pussy" will make a blind man buy a color TV set. Just ask Rep. I was hooked on Tammy and Nashville by this point. I had drunk the Cool-aid!

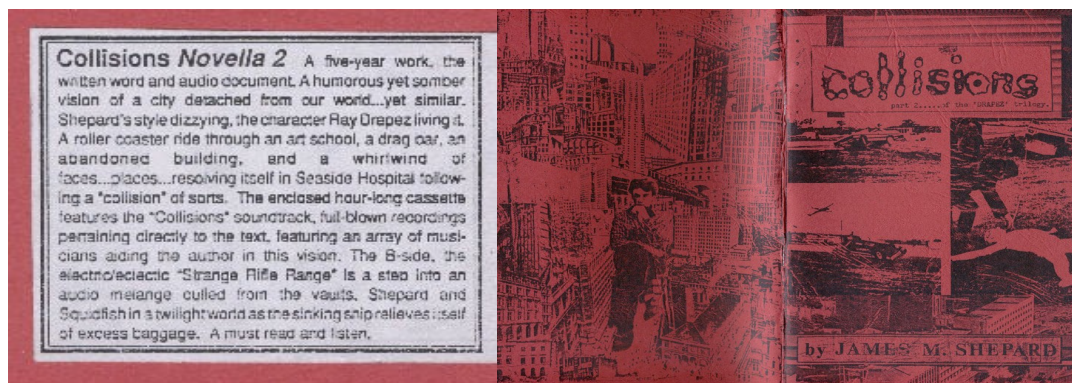
When I got back to the Columbus Tommy Jay had ask me to house sit his Harrisburg studio. He and Chris Brown were headed to some Jamaica campgrounds for a Festival. It featured the Grateful Dead and other international acts. So when November of 1982 rolled around I dropped Tommy and Chris off at the airport. Chris had given me the keys to her new car to drive. Woopie! Once again Tommy left me his stash to smoke. This time his stash was massive. He figured weed would not be a problem at a festival in Jamaica. So I drove from the airport out to Harrisburg and settle into the recording studio. The studio had a Sony black & white 1 inch reel to reel video recorder, along with my old Dokorder 4 track deck. At the time a major snow storm dumped a foot of snow making it hard to drive. However, the studio was well stock with weed, beer and food; so I didn't mind being shut in. Later that night **T. A. Lafferty** who lived a few houses away stopped by. We fired up a joint then recorded the "**The Stranger**". Things were going well but it was getting colder. So I went outside to the wood pile and it was frozen solid. Back then Tom heated the house with wood. It was before Harrisburg had a police force. There was no gas service back then. I brought a few wet logs in and place them on top of the wood burning heater thinking it would dry them out. I knew nothing about using wood to heat a house. After that I went back upstairs to the studio. Then Freight Train and I did the video shoot for "**The Stranger**". That song was a breakthrough for my writing. All my hard study was beginning to pay off. So by this time Tim and I are stoned out of our minds and Tim wants more beer. When he open the studio door smoke came drifting into the room. "**Holy Shit! Fire!**" Lafferty yelled. We both ran down the steps and discovered that we were not the only ones smoking! The logs I had placed in the stove were steaming smoke too. We grab a bucket and pitched the smoking wood in it. Next Tim placed the bucket in a snow bank as we watched the sparking wood sizzle out. Next, we opened all the doors to clear out the smoke from the house. Even before our misadventure Tom's House had smelled like burning wood. So no one noticed the smell. There was not any

smoke damage but now the house was just as cold as the outdoors. So we sealed the house up and got the wood burning heater going again. I felt terrible. We had almost burn down the house. But no harm was done. Tim show me how to work the heater in a safe manner. Next morning Mike Rep shows up and tells me I got off lucky. After he left Freight Train came back and I decided to do the video for **"Words of This Song"** in the living room, and then Lafferty suggested doing **"Kisses and Hugs"** in the kitchen.



The Sony Video Recorder was very heavy. When Tim tried to take it down the stairs he dropped it. To our horror it bounced like a ping pong ball down to the landing. *"Oh Shit!"* Tim shouted. We rush down the steps to access the damage and to our flabbergasted amazement the machine worked perfectly. Not a scratch. *"How in the hell did that happen"* Tim asked? *"Maybe It was the drugs?"* I said. We both broke out in to laughter at that point. *"There truly must be a God"* Tim said. *"Either that or this reefer is fucking pretty good"* as I took another toke. *"Bad boys, bad boys, want ya going do when they come for you?"*

The next morning I fired up a joint and recorded **"Nowhere 80"**. I had been messing around on Tom's acoustic and the song just pop out nowhere. So I turn on the deck and it was off to the races. I was extremely pleased with myself when I noticed some words on a legal pad. *"What's this"* I thought? It was to words to **"Tina Louise"** written by Mike Rep. *"Fuck me, This is great shit!"* I thought. So with another "one take" I nailed Tina Louise. I played the song for Mike the next day and he seemed to be inspired by it. Rep doesn't get very inspired often. So Rep and I went upstairs and recorded **"Mr. Bo Derek"**. It was a parody based on Mr. Bojangles which was a song written and originally recorded by American country music artist Jerry Jeff Walker for his 1968 album of the same title. Then there was a Object Music song about a **"Blow Job"** which Rep made up on the spot. Sometimes I wonder about that boy. Shortly thereafter **Jim Shepard** called me to set up a session for **Collisions**. It was the 2rd book installment in the **Drapez 3** book series. He released maybe 10 to 20 copies of Collisions and it's companion cassette. Like the first copy it came in a plastic bag. I am not sure if Jim released the final book in the series. I am sure he would have told me if he did. He would have wanted me to do the printing. The 3rd book may be hidden away some where in his lost vault archive. I don't know. I still would like to know how it ends. I do know that Collisions end with a twist.



Jim had 3 excerpts from the book he wanted to work on. The first was **"Union View"** and we did a one take for that. Union View was a vocals, bass, synth and drum based recording originally. A few years later I think **SkullBank** (Roxann Newman vocals, Jim Shepard guitar and vocals, Ray Bellani stik bass, Mike Rep vibes and Tommy Jay drums) did a live version of that song. The next song was **"Hospital Hospital"**. It was autobiographical story about Jim motorcycle accident. It recounts his recovery and shines a spotlight on the cast of Clearwater Florida characters. Towards the end of Jim's life he gave me his **Motorcycle Movie** CD which re-visits our early Object Music methodology. By

that time he had rejected almost all musical instruments in his artistic approach. The last song we recorded was the pure *"object music"* based **"The Voice"**. Both Hospital Hospital and The Voice were Object Music like recordings. The next day after Jim left I recorded a pop music experiment called **"Kisses and Hugs"**. Tammy always ended her letters to me with that sign off. Finally, toward the end of my stay **Chris the Anarchist, Arlus Stitch, Mike Rock, Max Flash** and **Dave Manic** stop by for a recording session. The session ended in a alcohol trance for all of us. However, it did yield a very interesting version of Arlus' parody of Nancy Sinatra's **"Boots Are Made For Walking"**. Arlus change the song and called it **"Hips Are Made For Humpin"**. We also might have took a swing at her song **"Eat My Wad"**. A few days later Tom and Chris arrive back at the airport. Towards the end of the Festival trip they got ripped off and had to sell some stuff for money. They seemed to be happy to be back in the USA. And I was happy they were both safe.

By January of 1983 The Screaming Urge had released **"Screaming Urge"** on the Raw-deal records. I took notice. It was their strongest effort yet. They were beginning to break out from the Cow-town scene. By this time, due to the snow I had to move back in with my mom on first avenue. I could not drive the moped in the snow and the bus line was only a 10 minute ride to the job. Mom didn't charge me rent so I stashed away six months of what little income I got for my move to Nashville. When my mom and sister found out about my plans they raised holy hell. Not only this, but all my friends disapproved. Not even Jim supported me. None of them understood the daily survival hell I was going through. If I lost my job the courts would put me in jail. I was sick and tired of being a charity case for my friends and family. I have always tried to do the right thing in life. Most of the time that meant that I would have to sacrifice my needs so that others could secure their wants. But in the end the universe always took good care of me too. I have no regrets. By the time I was 17 this was the way I rolled. I was use to going without by that time. The lawyers had cleaned me out. No doubt. I made a lot of sacrifices for the people I love. But all of them were worth it. Most of the time they never saw or understood that. But Jim, mom and my sister understood. My fate made it impossible for me to support myself for the early part of my life. It was only till I reached 50 that I got financial stability. Then the final blow came. In March of 1983 I had my moped stolen from work. I have lost my freedom. It felt like I had lost everything. I said, *"fuck it"*. So I sold off anything of value and was able to raise 200 bucks for one last session at Ed Whitney's **Star Track** studio out on the east side of Columbus. At that point all I had was my guitar and clothes. I was just one step away from becoming a homeless person. But the song writing was really beginning to gel. And I had some new songs I needed to record.

Somehow, someway I was able to convince **Stik Hoffman (bass), Tommy Jay (drums), Jim Jenkins (vocal), Danny White (vocal), Mike Rep (keyboard) Jim Shepard (guitar)** and **Chris Brown (vocal)** to record some of my new songs. So we recorded **"Are You Fooling Yourself", "Heart Of My Heart" "Prisoner Of Love"** and a crazy ass parody of Chuck Berry's **"Nashville Tennessee"**. **Ed Whitney** didn't know what to think of my crew when we all showed up with massive amounts of beer and weed in the control room. It turned in to party instead of a recording session. Ed told me I was wasting my money. As a favor He had given 4 hours of time for \$200 bucks which was half the rate he normally charged. Also, Ed didn't like punk rock. He had a successful horn band that command anywhere from \$1500-\$2500 a gig. And He was always heavily booked. He only agreed to do my session out of friendship. He had been recording **McGuffey Lane** the week before. So when we got done Ed was in shock. He didn't understand what happen that night. He was one bamboozled pastrami after my session. WFT? We were not the professionals he assumed we were. We were wankers. So Ed said *"fuck It"* and got drunk and high with us. It had to be one of the most interesting sessions he ever did. I was happy with the results. So I moved forward with my plan. By April and June of 1983 I was back out at Tommy's mixing down **"Buffalo Shit" "Bombs Over Beirut" "Kisses and Hugs" "Xmas in a Glass"** and **"Words Of This Song"**. We ask Stik Hoffman to add some special effect to **"Bombs Over Beirut"** which ended up on my **Squid Songs** LP later. That July I had turn in my 2 week notice and got paid for the sick leave and vacation time I had accumulated. After that I had about \$1,200 bucks to travel on. I was set. So on July 22th 1983 I took a bus to Stik's place and spent my last day in Columbus Ohio drinking gin and snorting coke. The coke he had was so powerful that I drank a bottle of gin by myself but didn't feel a thing. Then my sister showed up and took me to

the Columbus Greyhound station for my 11:00 PM departure for Nashville. She was not happy but knew there was nothing anyone could do to talk me out of it. Fate would have it's way with me.

So in total terror I got on the greyhound bus with my bedroll, a change of clothes and my guitar, then took my seat. I had bottle gin stashed in my bedroll for the trip. I drank it and then blackout. All night long I heard the bottle kept rolling around on the back of the bus. 10 hours later I arrived in the Nashville bus station with the mother of all hangovers. *"What the fuck happen? Oh shit I'm in Nashville. I did it"*. I got off the bus and tried to call Tammy for help. I left a message but there was no reply. So after an hour waiting by the phone I hit the street. While walking around Lower Broadway I found a few homeless places where I could spend the night. That is, if I couldn't rent an apartment right away. My plan had been to rent a car for a week then go to the YMCA and rent a room. When I got to the YMCA help desk I was told they didn't rent rooms. Their YMCA was only for gym and swimming work outs. That's when my plan fell apart. I ask the clerk to use the phone and called my sister. She read me the riot act and told me I had to make it in Nashville. *"You've given up everything for this. Your family. Your job. You have to make it work"*, she said. So I was back out on the edge where I belonged. As I walk out onto the street a man came up to me and said. *"I heard you talking to your sister on the phone. Do you have any money for a deposit and first months rent"*? I told him, *"Yes but it is in Western Union travelers checks"*. He said *"Fine let me make a call. Wait here"*. When he came back he asked for my social security and drivers license number. Then he gave me a number and address to this rich Jewish lawyer family in the west end. I drove to their home and explained what I was trying to do and for some reason they believed me and accepted my travels checks. I found out later on that thousands of songwriter had did it the same way I was doing it. They were accustom to the "Hail Mary" approach in Nashville. In fact they knew many of the stars who had stated out in their rentals. Most of their friends in the music business had did the Hail Mary approach. So I was just another wannabe who needed to get a break. They gave me the keys to a totally furnished one room efficiency apartment. It had a small kitchen and bath. It was modest and clean. So by 5:00 PM I was all set. I was so exhausted from all the stress of the last 24 hours that I slept for two days straight on the fold out bed. When I woke up a whole new wonderful world began to unfolded before my very eyes. I had pulled it off. Now it was time to get to work on the next part of my plan.